

## **Americans Still Cutting Back on the Little Things to Save Money**

*Two-thirds buying more generic brands and almost half brown-bagging lunch*

**New York, N.Y. — July 21, 2010** — There are many big changes people can make to save money – cut back on all entertainment, for example. But there are also a number of smaller things people can do to save money, and with the economy not yet turning around, it seems many Americans have opted for this approach. Almost two-thirds of U.S. (65%) adults say they are purchasing more generic brands to save money, slightly up from February when 63% said they were doing this.

These are some of the results of **The Harris Poll** of 2,227 adults surveyed online between June 14 and 21, 2010 by **Harris Interactive**.

Almost half of Americans (48%) say they are brown bagging lunch instead of purchasing it to save money, also slightly up from February when 45% said they were doing this. Two in five U.S. adults each say they have switched to refillable water bottles instead of purchasing bottles of water (39%) and are going to the hairdresser less often (38%). In February, one-third of Americans (34%) had switched to refillable water bottles to save money. Also, one-quarter (24%) have cut down on dry cleaning.

Looking at media habits, three in ten U.S. adults (31%) have cancelled one or more magazine subscriptions and just under one in five (17%) have cancelled a newspaper subscription. It's not just reading habits that are changing in these economic times, though. One in five Americans (22%) have cancelled or cut back cable television service while an additional 22% say they have considered doing so.

In addition to brown-bagging it, other work habits have also changed. One in five Americans (22%) have stopped purchasing coffee in the morning, while 12% have begun carpooling or using mass transit (but this is not applicable to 48% of Americans who may not be working or may not have the ability to carpool or use mass transit).

Phone service has also changed as 15% have cancelled their landline service and are only using cell phones, with an additional 22% saying they have considered this to save money. Cell phone usage is also changing as 15% say they have changed or cancelled cell service to save money, with an additional 17% of Americans saying they have considered doing so.

### **So What?**

Americans are doing whatever it takes to cut back on spending. For some that means forgoing name brands for generics, for others it means letting their hair get a little longer before having it cut. What happens in the future with these small changes will be interesting to watch. It could be that once these numbers start going in the other direction, the economy has turned the corner. Or, as some economists are saying, the culture of saving and cutting back will remain after the economic recovery.

**TABLE 1**  
**SPENDING/SAVINGS OVER PAST SIX MONTHS**

“Have you done or considered doing any of the following over the past six months in order to save money?”

Base: All U.S. adults

		Have Done	Have Considered	Have not done nor considered	Not applicable
Purchasing more generic brands	%	65	13	15	7
Brown bagging lunch instead of purchasing it	%	48	7	12	32
Switched to refillable water bottle instead of purchasing bottle of water	%	39	9	21	30
Going to the hairdresser/barber/stylist less often	%	38	7	29	26
Cancelled one or more magazine subscriptions	%	31	4	24	41
Cut down on dry cleaning	%	24	3	13	61
Cancelled or cut back cable television service	%	22	22	40	16
Stopped purchasing coffee in the morning	%	22	4	18	56
Cancelled a newspaper subscription	%	17	10	27	46
Changed or cancelled cell phone service	%	15	17	51	17
Cancelled landline phone service and only using cell phone	%	15	22	42	22
Begun carpooling or using mass transit	%	12	8	32	48

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 2**  
**SPENDING/SAVINGS OVER PAST SIX MONTHS – TREND OF HAVE DONE**

“Have you done or considered doing any of the following over the past six months in order to save money?”

*Percent saying “Have done”*

Base: All U.S. adults

		June 2009	Oct. 2009	Feb. 2010	June 2010
Purchasing more generic brands	%	62	64	63	<b>65</b>
Brown bagging lunch instead of purchasing it	%	47	47	45	<b>48</b>
Switched to refillable water bottle instead of purchasing bottle of water	%	33	36	34	<b>39</b>
Going to the hairdresser/barber/stylist less often	%	36	43	39	<b>38</b>
Cancelled one or more magazine subscriptions	%	29	34	33	<b>31</b>
Cut down on dry cleaning	%	20	22	22	<b>24</b>
Cancelled or cut back cable television service	%	19	21	22	<b>22</b>
Stopped purchasing coffee in the morning	%	15	20	21	<b>22</b>
Cancelled a newspaper subscription	%	17	21	19	<b>17</b>
Changed or cancelled cell phone service	%	14	15	17	<b>15</b>
Cancelled landline phone service and only using cell phone	%	11	12	15	<b>15</b>
Begun carpooling or using mass transit	%	13	14	14	<b>12</b>

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 3**  
**SPENDING/SAVINGS OVER PAST SIX MONTHS – BY GENERATION**

“Have you done or considered doing any of the following over the past six months in order to save money?”  
Percent saying “Have done”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Generation			
		Echo Boomers (18-33)	Gen. X (34-45)	Baby Boomers (46-64)	Matures (65+)
		%	%	%	%
Purchasing more generic brands	<b>65</b>	62	67	65	68
Brown bagging lunch instead of purchasing it	<b>48</b>	54	57	53	19
Switched to refillable water bottle instead of purchasing bottle of water	<b>39</b>	43	40	36	39
Going to the hairdresser/barber/stylist less often	<b>38</b>	37	33	44	36
Cancelled one or more magazine subscriptions	<b>31</b>	23	24	36	41
Cut down on dry cleaning	<b>24</b>	18	17	28	33
Cancelled or cut back cable television service	<b>22</b>	20	19	29	16
Stopped purchasing coffee in the morning	<b>22</b>	25	22	22	16
Cancelled a newspaper subscription	<b>17</b>	12	17	19	24
Changed or cancelled cell phone service	<b>15</b>	15	18	18	7
Cancelled landline phone service and only using cell phone	<b>15</b>	19	15	16	5
Begun carpooling or using mass transit	<b>12</b>	21	10	9	5

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

**Methodology**

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between June 14 and 21, 2010 among 2,227 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

***These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.***

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***The Harris Poll*® #91, July 21, 2010**

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